

What, exactly, is PAIMI?

PAIMI stands for *Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness*. The program was established in 1986 by the federal government after public hearings uncovered abuse and neglect in psychiatric facilities. The program has broad authority to investigate reported or suspected incidents of abuse, mistreatment and neglect of citizens with mental illness in institutions, residential facilities, community programs, or living independently in the community.

PAIMI also protects and fights for the rights of people with mental illness. It works to identify and remove systemic barriers that prevent citizens with psychiatric disabilities from exercising their rights. PAIMI is a

program of the Office of Protection and Advocacy for Persons with Disabilities.

PAIMI has the authority under 42 USC §§ 10801 - 10827 to gain access to records of people who are subject to abuse or neglect and may be unable to provide written consent and/or whose legal representatives have not acted on their behalf.

People are encouraged to call for advice on self-advocacy. Complaints and/or allegations can be filed confidentially with PAIMI staff. Spanish speaking staff are available. PAIMI's advocacy and legal services, if needed, are available at no cost to you and are completely confidential.

IT IS YOUR LEGAL RIGHT TO FILE A COMPLAINT IF YOU ARE BEING MISTREATED OR ABUSED!



If you are an individual with a mental illness, PAIMI can

- provide advice and guidance on rights and services.
- pursue administrative, legal, and other appropriate actions to ensure the protection of rights.
- investigate allegations of abuse and neglect.
- offer training on rights to mental health consumer groups and other interested related groups.

Under the Patient Bill of Rights, C.G.S. §§17a-540 et. seq., some of your rights include:

- Freedom from physical or mental abuse or harm.
- The right to vote.
- To use personal funds and manage personal affairs.
- Access to individual storage space.
- A written, specialized treatment plan that meets your needs.
- To participate in developing the plan and to be told of its contents.
- Reasonable notice of discharge.
- A discharge plan.
- To receive medical treatment for illness, injury or any disability.
- That medication is not to be used as a substitute for treatment.

Some restrictions apply to the following rights. (Refer to the statute for details).

- Access to a telephone.
- Written correspondence with anyone without interference.
- Freedom from restraints and seclusion.
- Freedom to attend religious services of your choice.
- See visitors of your choice.
- Wear your own clothing.
- To keep and use personal possessions.
- Right to refuse medication or request a change of medication.

You should be informed of your rights upon admission and these rights must be posted on each unit.

Self Advocacy Tips

1. Obtain a copy of the facility's grievance procedures and use it.
2. Keep written notes including who you spoke to and what was said.
3. Be patient, but persistent, allowing time for a response.
4. Ask for advocacy advice or support if you feel you need it.
5. Get any commitments or agreements in writing.
6. Remember to be respectful and treat the "other side" as you would like to be treated.

Other Advocacy Resources

Connecticut Legal Rights Project

Connecticut Valley Hospital

P.O. Box 351, Silver Street

Middletown, CT 06457

(860) 262-5030, (877) 402-2299

Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services - Client Rights Division

410 Capitol Avenue - P.O. Box 341431

Hartford, CT 06134

(860) 418-6933, (800) 446-7348 ext. 6933

(888) 621-3551 (TTY)

Statewide Legal Services

425 Main Street

Middletown, CT 06457

(860) 344-8096, (800) 453-3320

(860) 541-5069 (TTY)

To file a complaint against a licensed health care professional or licensed facility contact:

State Department of Public Health

(860) 509-7407, (800) 842-0038

(860) 509-7191 (TTY)



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
Office of Protection and Advocacy
for Persons with Disabilities
PAIMI Program
60-B Weston Street
Hartford, CT 06120-1551



Call

1 (800) 842-7303 (Toll free CT-Only)
(860) 297-4380 (TTY)
(860) 297-4300 (Voice/TTY)

e-mail: OPA-Information@po.state.ct.us
on-line: <http://www.ct.gov/opapd>

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alternate format upon request.

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PROTECTION AND ADVOCACY FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL ILLNESS



**If you feel you have been
abused, neglected or
don't know your rights,**

PAIMI CAN HELP!

PAIMI works to protect the rights of individuals with mental illness who are in community residential programs, homeless shelters, state or private institutions including hospitals, residential care homes, nursing homes and correctional facilities.